

is the result of years and years, I do not mean any criticism of the current administration of the City of Omaha because it goes way behind...beyond...beyond their involvement, but it's stuff that should have been handled through routine maintenance. You don't do plumbing, you don't do facades onto buildings, you don't do those types of things with a special tax. That's part of routine maintenance that's supposed to have taken place throughout the years. All of those things being said, those are rationales for not supporting it. The real concern I have and this is why I'm glad it's unfolding, we're having a debate tonight and we have a full summer before it comes back, the real concern I have, the big concern, all of these other things might be dealt with if this one were addressed and that is I am fearful...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ..we will pass a half-cent sales tax, put 16 million dollars into a building in downtown Omaha, people will continue to not be excited about using it because we haven't done the full picture of what needs to be done. The full picture of what needs to be done is Omaha needs an event facility, at least one. It needs...and it also needs an area where people can have conventions. It sickens me to go to cities like Indianapolis, like San Antonio, like Cincinnati, like other places I've been for conventions, and see those cities that have had city leadership and county leadership and business leadership that's been able to get together and put up first class, high quality facilities for events, for conventions. They've been able to revitalize their downtown areas or other areas of their city around these...

PRESIDENT MOUL: Time.

SENATOR WITHEM: ..sort of facilities. I am fearful if this gets passed, that's all that will be done. I would certainly consider supporting, despite my opposition, my negative concerns about this, I would support some sort of funding mechanism...

PRESIDENT MOUL: Time.

SENATOR WITHEM: ..if I saw it as part of the big picture of the City of Omaha and all facets of its leadership getting together to create a visionary plan for an event type of facility. I know Senator Ashford...